

4 ENERGIES WORKBOOK

*The key to empowering
yourself*



35 PAGES

The workbook

The workbook focuses on your individual work-life balance, on 4 energies: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual.

You will learn and practise how to balance:

- Individual energies
- Diet
- Physical activity
- Rest
- Mental energy
- Emotional energy
- Spiritual energy
- Time management and core values

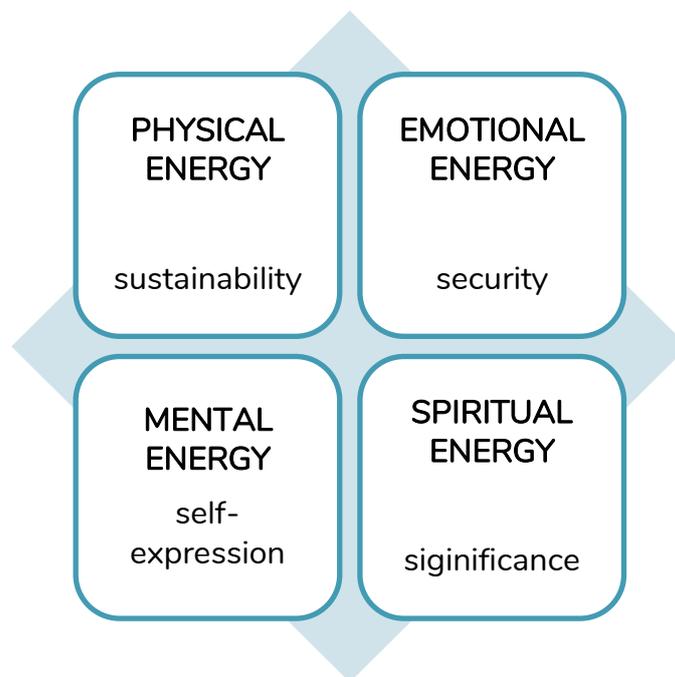
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1. Balance your individual energies

The importance of balancing our different types of energy is based on biology and has been demonstrated in countless studies. This is not just about increasing happiness; it is about increasing effectiveness. Human beings have a finite amount of energy that they can use before they need rest and recuperation. We may want to push ourselves more but once our energy in a certain area is spent, we are asking for burnout by pushing ourselves further. It is, therefore, more important to focus on managing our energy than managing our time.

In their bestselling book, *The Way We're Working Isn't Working*, authors Schwartz, McCarthy and Gomes list four types of energy that we need to focus on replenishing each day. This is referred to as our "Four Essential Needs": Sustainability, security, self-expression and significance.



Sustainability: Being able to regularly rejuvenate and take care of yourself. Feeling healthy, fit and resilient.

Security: Feeling appreciated, cared for, valued for who you are and what you do.

Self-expression: Freedom to develop and express your unique skills and talents.

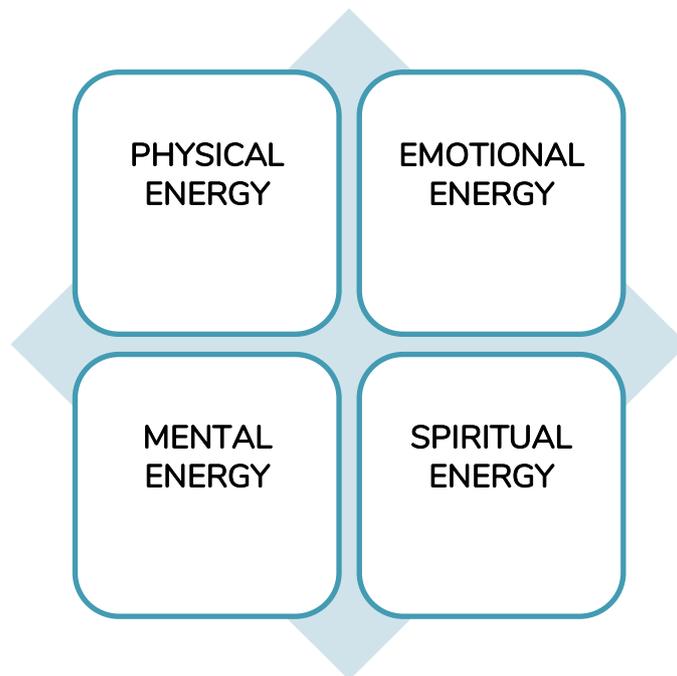
Significance: What you stand for and believe in; what gives you a sense of meaning¹. We need to find a balance between taking care of ourselves and taking care of others.

Taking care of each energy source will lead us to feel more balanced. The clue is to find your individual way for rejuvenating each type of energy. In this chapter, I will share some tips I have learned from balancing energy in the hope that they will be useful to you.

Exercise No. 2

Work-life balance “legs”

Stand up next to a wall with both feet firmly on the ground. Feel how stable you are. Now place both palms on the wall. Do you feel a difference? Do you feel more stable and secure? Now, imagine that every limb you lean on is a type of energy. What happens when you lift one leg or one hand? What happens when you stand on just one foot? Can you stand firmly on one hand?



¹ *The Way We're Working Isn't Working: The four keys to transforming the way we work and live*, Tony Schwartz, Jean Gomes, Catherine McCarthy, p.9

This is what happens when you don't balance these different types of energy.

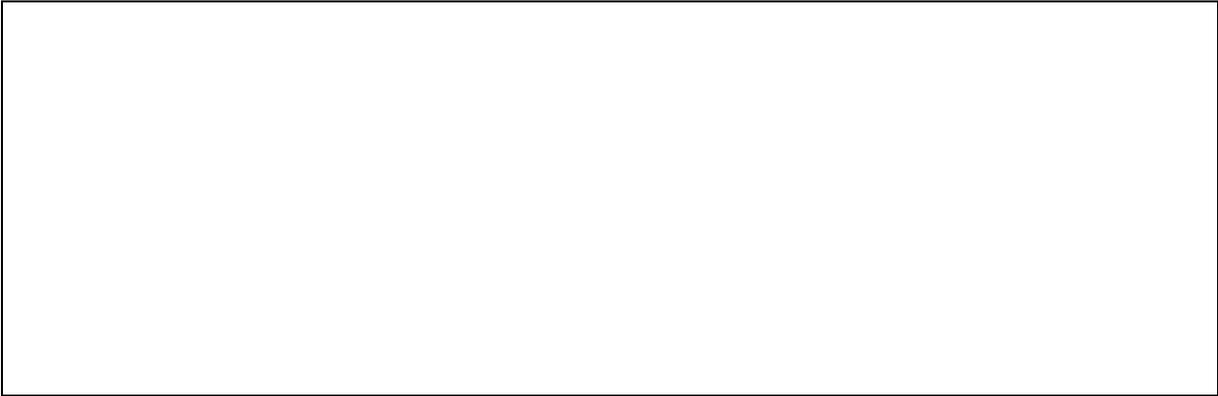
Now, sit down again and think about the four types of energy in your life and what you do to maintain each of them. Note your thoughts here:

Physical energy:

Emotional energy:

Mental energy:

Spiritual energy:



2. Physical Energy: Diet

Recuperation of physical energy is based on three basic components: healthy eating, physical activity, and rest. There is nothing revelatory about this statement. We have all known since childhood that these three areas are the cornerstones to physical wellbeing. However, these three components of health tend to be the first thing to go when we are stressed and overwhelmed at work.

Tips to stay on track with a healthy diet

- Develop an awareness of your own daily diet. You can do this by logging your food using a free application (e.g. My Fitness Pal or Fitatu) or by consulting a dietician.
- Choose healthy foods that you enjoy. For example, I am not fond of shellfish or fruit, so I do not force myself to eat them. I just try to eat more vegetables and other types of fish to get the nutrients I need.
- Always plan your meals for the following day. If I have time, I prepare meals in advance and pack them in reusable lunchboxes. When I do not have time or if I will be in transit all day, I research where I can eat in advance and how I can make time to fit in a nutritious lunch. I always carry healthy snacks with me in my bag, e.g. fruit, nuts, chopped vegetables, and energy bars. I aim to eat every 3 or 4 hours.
- Drink a lot of water. Buying a good quality reusable water bottle can help to encourage you to drink more.
- Eat mindfully: Start with small portions, eat slowly and pause before getting seconds. Avoid the distraction of electronic devices while eating.
- Use the Hunger Scale to help you maintain healthy eating habits. Stay in the middle of the scale by starting to eat at 3 or 4 and stopping at 5 or 6.

1	So starved you're week and dizzy
2	Extremely hungry and feeling irritable; lots of stomach growling
3	Less famished; hungry enough for occasional stomach growling
4	Mildly hungry – often following a light snack
5	Satiated –feeling neither hunger nor fullness
6	Mildly full with no discomfort
7	Full enough for mild discomfort
8	Stuffed enough for more notable discomfort
9	“Christmas-stuffed”, possible with extreme discomfort
10	Filled to the point of feeling sick

Exercise No. 3

One week with healthy diet

Try to practice two of the healthy eating habits mentioned above over the course of a week. We encourage you to use mindful eating for at least one meal a day and to monitor your hunger scale while eating lunch and dinner. To help you with this task, we prepared a simple monitoring form. All you need to do is mark the task you completed:

	Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Saturday		Sunday	
	Mindful eating	Hunger scale												
Breakfast														
Lunch														
Dinner														

3. Physical Energy: Exercise

Regular physical activity not only has a positive effect on how our bodies look and feel. It also has a major role to play in coping with stress. Exercise and other physical activity produce feel-good endorphins and improve our ability to sleep, which in turn reduces stress.

If you are still unconvinced of the importance of increasing physical activity in your daily life, consider the following positive effects of regular exercise:

1. Lower rates of coronary heart disease, hypertension, stroke, diabetes, colon and breast cancer and a higher level of cardio respiratory and muscular fitness.
2. A healthier body mass and composition and enhanced bone health.
3. Higher levels of functional health.
4. Better cognitive functioning.
5. Higher levels of wellbeing.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO)², adults aged 18+ years should do at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity throughout the week or at least 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity throughout the week, or an equivalent combination of both.

Aerobic activity should be performed in sets of at least 10 minutes duration.

For additional health benefits, adults should increase their moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity to 300 minutes per week or engage in 150 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity per week, or an equivalent combination of both.

Muscle-strengthening activities should be done involving major muscle groups on 2 or more days a week.

²WHO (2010). Global recommendations on physical activity for health.

The WHO³ also gives the following tips for becoming more physically active:

- **Create an intention:** Before you start to change your behaviour, it is important to create an intention. An intention could be for example: "I want to improve my fitness", "I want to handle stress better", "I want to be in better shape so I can go hiking with my children next summer".
- **Plan your activities:** To realise your goal, it is best to define concrete and realistic plans for yourself to consolidate your motivation. Therefore, you define *what* you want to do in your daily life and *when* and *how* you will do it.
- **Choose a physical activity that you enjoy:** We are all different. We have different preferences, body types and different past experiences. Although it is important to combine all types of exercise (aerobic, strength, balance and flexibility), the key to success is to find a type of exercise that you enjoy. There is nothing less motivating than forcing yourself to do things that you hate. So, if you don't have a favourite sport, try out some new ones. Start going for long walks and gradually work your way up to jogging. Go to the swimming pool. Sign up for yoga or another type of group fitness class. Once you have tried a few different sports, choose whichever one is the most enjoyable for you.
- **Recognise and experience barriers:** It can be easy to start exercising but difficult to maintain your new routine. Events (e.g. unexpected visitors), other barriers (e.g. bad weather conditions) or your inner couch potato (e.g. "I would prefer to stay in and read my book today") may hinder you in doing your planned activities. Such barriers are normal. You will experience them more often at the beginning of your active lifestyle. Acknowledge them and come up with strategies to deal with them.
- **'Postponed is not abandoned':** Learn coping strategies for times when you get off track. If an unexpected event occurs, it can be convenient to abstain from the planned activity. However, if you live according to the motto 'postponed is not abandoned', it encourages you to stick with it and come up with a new plan. If unexpected events happen more often, you can adapt your plans to accommodate them. Encouraging your family and friends to join you in your activity can be a great way to combine socialising with physical activity.

³Based on Needs analysis of Active I project, 2013-2016, 539664-LLP-1-2013-1-DE-GRUNDTVIG-GMP

You can use coping strategies for other barriers. In this case, coping strategies just means an alternative course of action in the face of certain events. For example, if it's raining and you can't exercise outside, you could plan to go for a swim in an indoor swimming pool instead.

If your biggest enemy is your inner couch potato, you can employ several strategies to cope with this. For example, you can make plans to exercise with friends, which can help to motivate you. Even just telling other people about your intentions can act as an external motivator. Positive self-talk can also help to motivate you as well as visualisation of the positive effects of exercising.

You will have to find your own strategy to overcome internal or external barriers. Test them in several situations and adapt the techniques that work best for you.

Exercise No. 4

Healthy physical activities

Now that you know the theory, it is time to make your healthy physical activity plan. Answer the questions below:

1. What is your intention? What is the change you want to apply in your life?

2. What physical activities do you enjoy the most?

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3. Make a weekly plan:

	Physical activity
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	
Sunday	

4. What barriers do you think you will experience? How will you cope with them?

Barriers	Coping Strategies

5. Physical Energy: Rest

Whether you like it or not, your body needs to rest. Nowadays, we tend to treat this duty as a luxury activity. Many of us feel guilty for taking time to rest and see it as being idle. Even during weekends, we plan so many tasks: laundry, housework, gardening, etc. While this can feel productive, it means we stay in work mode constantly. People need to learn how to rest properly.

The following are some tips for how to incorporate rest into your routine:

- **Sleep** at least 7 hours a night. The best time for restorative sleep is between 10 pm and 2 am, when our body produces the most melatonin and human growth hormone. Matthew Walker, in his book *Why We Sleep*, demonstrates how lack of sleep can diminish and even ruin our cognitive skills and immune system. Our body and mind need sleep to learn, remember and create. We also need sleep to maintain a fully functioning immune system and fight diseases, including dangerous cancer cells. The author gives some advice on how to sleep well:
 - Avoid caffeine and alcohol, especially if you suffer from sleep deprivation.
 - Try to maintain a regular bedtime and get up at the same time every day. Regularity will anchor your sleep and improve the quantity and quality of that sleep.
 - Keep your bedroom at a cool temperature: 18 degrees Celsius is optimal. Your body needs to drop its core temperature to fall into deep sleep.
- **Breaks at work.** Note that you can only work effectively for ninety minutes without pause. You may technically work for longer than this, but it will put a strain on your mind to focus your attention on the task at hand and you can start to feel physically uncomfortable. Take a break to refresh your energy every 90 minutes. Have a short walk in the fresh air or even just a stretch. Take time to have healthy meals and snacks throughout the day and avoid distractions like phones and computers. Give your mind a break from this stimulus and instead chat with colleagues or friends or just enjoy quiet time. You can also take some short breaks to meditate and practise mindfulness. This can be very

beneficial if you find yourself preoccupied with work stress as it can remind you to come back to the present and calm your mind.

- **Weekends.** If possible, plan your working week so that you enjoy two full days off. I completely understand that for many people this is just not possible. However, it is important to remember that, throughout history, cultures from all over the world have designated at least one day for rest, reflection, and connecting with our social circle. The human spirit needs this time to slow down and recalibrate before another busy week begins. The weekend is often our best time to do this. Try not to miss the opportunity.
- **Holidays.** Go on holidays and encourage your colleagues and staff to do the same. Some people prefer short, one-week holidays more frequently, while others need at least three week's holidays to reenergise themselves effectively. *How* we rest is more important than *how long* we rest. If we bring our work phone on holiday or check emails several times a day, we are not allowing ourselves to fully rest. Our holidays can end up being a waste of time and money as we get no restorative benefit from them. Plan effectively and try to disconnect fully in order to enjoy the true benefits of a good holiday on your energy levels.

Exercise No. 5

How do I rest?

I would like you to be honest with yourself. Take some time to think about your resting habits and answer these questions:

1. When you are working, how often do you take breaks? What do you do when you are on your break?

2. How many hours do you sleep per night? Do you go to bed at regular hours?

3. Do you take holidays every year? How do you like to rest on holidays?

4. What works for you and what does not while you are on holidays?

5. What would you like to change? Make an intention:

6. Emotional Energy

Feelings like anger, fear, and anxiety are useful when we are in a dangerous situation. Humans evolved our “fight or flight” response over millennia as a defence mechanism to cope with extreme situations. It is because of this instinct that we have survived as a species. However, the unfortunate reality is that our bodies have not had time to adapt to the modern world. Life has changed dramatically for us humans. We may not be facing ferocious predators on a daily basis anymore, but our bodies don't necessarily know this. When we face a stressful situation at work, even though we know that we are usually not in any danger, we can still react with the same extreme intensity as our ancestors would have in the face of a physical threat. Our “fight or flight” instinct can become part of our daily routine and can lead to long-term stress, frustration, depression, exhaustion, and, eventually, burnout.

Most of us want to feel motivated, engaged, optimistic, and calm. We strive to feel happy most of the time, whether we are at work, home or on holidays.

The following are some ideas for how to take care of your emotional energy:

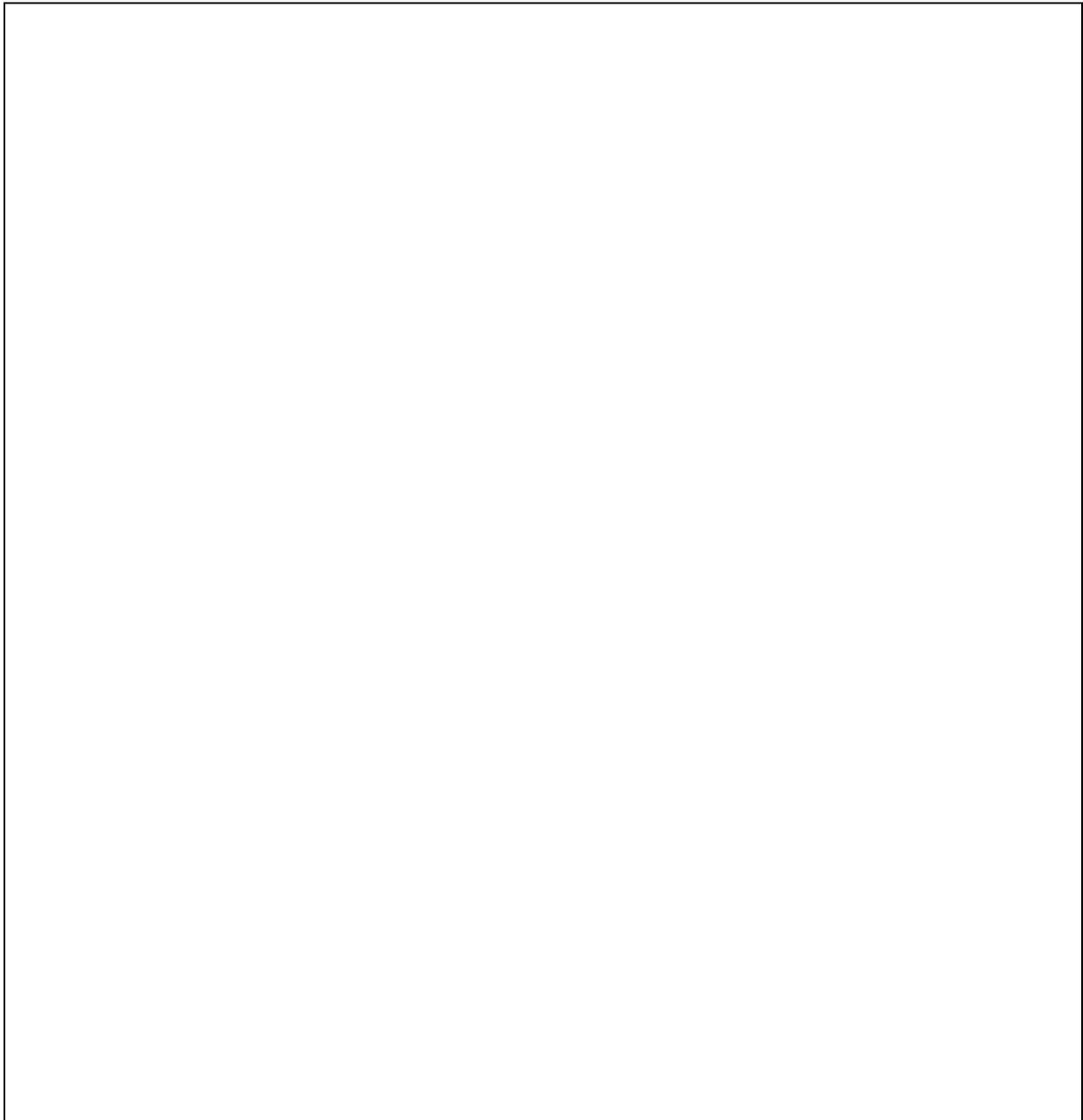
- Our emotional state is profoundly connected with how we take care of our body and physical energy. Whenever you are emotionally unbalanced, take the opportunity to move your body. Walk, cycle or even just stretch. This makes your body feel good and has a knock-on effect on your emotions.
- Cultivate positive emotions. It is scientifically proven that our brains spend more time and energy analysing our failures and mistakes than celebrating our successes. Be aware of that and try to notice even small daily pleasures. During difficult phases, plan to have at least one enjoyable activity every day. Be kind to yourself.
- Connect with people you find positive. Feeling that we belong is one of the most important needs we have. It gives us appreciation, joy, understanding and much more. Spending time with people we like and who like us has the same curable influence on our emotions as a healthy diet does on our body
- When you are triggered by a stressful situation, take three deep breaths before reacting. If possible, go for a walk or just give yourself time to let your first, and probably negative, emotions leave your body. It is an unquestionable rule that

if we are not in real danger and can therefore afford to not react immediately, we will make a better decision if we take time to cool down.

Exercise No. 6

My emotional energy

Make a list of things and activities which help you to maintain balanced emotional energy:



7. Mental Energy

Be attentive and sensitive to your mind. This is one of the most important parts of your body, it needs to be nursed and treated well, just like everything else: Your muscles, stomach, heart, etc. We all want our minds to be productive, clear, rested and ready to tackle difficult tasks. But they are not machines or computers. They need rest and time to refuel.

The following are some ideas for how to take care of your mental energy:

- Do one thing at the time. Multitasking does not develop our efficiency. In fact, there is a wealth of research that proves that multitasking reduces efficiency. Our mind is simply not capable of dealing with different tasks simultaneously. While it may be possible, it takes huge energy to skip between several different tasks. Moreover, if we try to do two things at once, e.g. talking on the phone while writing an email, we tend to perform both tasks half as well as if we had focused on just one. We can only operate at 100% and splitting your attention between several tasks means that all will suffer. This yields lower quality results and can damage our reputation as a professional and even our relationships with others. People are aware when they only have part of your attention!
- When working on one task, eliminate external distractions. Emails are a good example. They are constantly popping up and trying to grab our attention. A good solution for dealing with this is to schedule specific times of day to check your email and to keep your mail application closed and notifications off outside of this time.
- Designate a specific time of day for your creative or strategic work. Usually people are more effective in the morning, but this can vary from person to person. Find the time that best suits you. The goal is to be fully engaged during this time. Research indicates that the ideal amount of time to dedicate to this type of activity is no less than 45 minutes and no more than 90 minutes at any given time. This gives your mind time to fully engage with the process without over-exerting it. After each session, take time to rest your mind: Have lunch, go for a walk, chat with colleagues, do some meditation, etc.
- Practise mindfulness. Mindfulness is a great tool to exercise our attention. Distractions that we are experiencing are not always external. In fact, the

biggest culprits tend to be internal, specifically the stream of thoughts running through our minds at any given time. Mindfulness teaches us how to bring our attention back into focus.

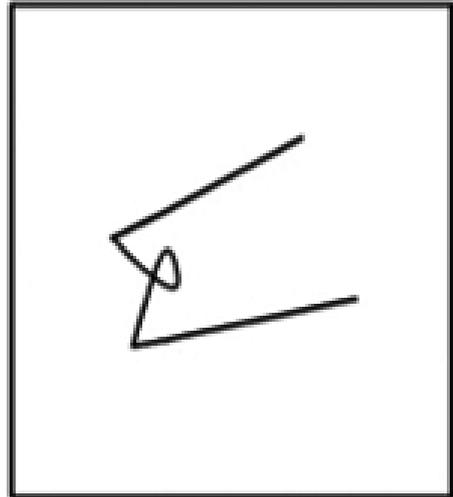
- Develop your right-thinking brain. We are used to paying attention to our left-thinking brain, i.e. the part of our brain that is logical, tactical, analytical and rational. However, when we don't prioritise the right-thinking part of our brains, we can struggle to think creatively in response to challenges and situations. In the modern world, our right-thinking brain tends to be the most neglected, so nourish it by spending time on creative or inspiring activities, such as drawing, painting, mindfulness, or spending time in nature.

Exercise No. 7

Complete the Incomplete Figure Test

The Torrance Test of Creative Thinking was introduced by psychologist Ellis Paul Torrance in the 1960s as a way to administer a more creatively inclined IQ test. Respondents were given images like the ones below and asked to finish the picture. Higher points were awarded for answers that included rich imagery, implied narrative, or used humour or fantasy.

But you don't need to be part of a research study to take this test! Give yourself 2 minutes to complete the pictures.



8. Spiritual Energy

This source of energy is maybe the most important for our sense of balance but, at the same time, it is the most challenging area to define and replenish. It revolves around our values and priorities: “Why you are doing what you are doing?”. A simple question with no simple answer. To discover your true, deeply held values, you need to be in touch with your inner ego and to constantly develop self-knowledge.

The following are some ideas for how to take care of your spiritual energy:

- **Get to know your values.** Ask yourself what is important to you? It may be family, career, children, partner, financial success, passion, fitness, friends, enjoyment, learning or self-development. Now think of how much time and what kind of time you dedicate to each of the things that you have identified as most important to you. Are you happy with the results of this reflection? What can you change in your life to achieve a more satisfactory balance between your priorities? Knowing your values is like seeing a signpost at a crossroads. Whenever you must make a choice, it shows you the direction you should take.
- **Reconnect with your inner voice.** We can all end up acting in ways that please others rather than ourselves. We are constantly working under time pressure, deadlines, bosses, and funders and can forget why we are doing our job. In such times, it is worth stopping for a moment or longer to check if we are on the right track with our values and priorities. Sometimes just reminding ourselves of our core values is enough to rebuild energy and empower us to perform better and can alleviate frustration and restlessness.
- **Practise mindfulness.** This is quickly becoming a mantra, but mindfulness is good for balancing all types of energy, including spiritual energy. When you breathe consciously for just 5 minutes, you train your attention (mind energy); you observe and accept your thoughts and feelings, which develops self-awareness (spiritual energy); and, finally, you reduce stress (emotional energy). Moreover, this is a tool that almost anyone can use at almost any time. And it works.
- **Serve others.** A good way to replenish spiritual energy is to look beyond our own self-interests and to serve others. Contributing our skills and energy to

other people is a wonderful way to keep aligned with our values and to remind ourselves of what life is really about. If we can find a way to do this that is also enjoyable for us and that uses our skills and strengths, it can be even more beneficial to us. Serving others does not always mean doing voluntary work. It can be as simple as helping your neighbours, friends and family. Find what works best for you and what renews your spiritual energy.

Exercise No. 8

Your Core Values

Core values are the best place to start from when you are making plans for your personal or professional life. Knowing what matters, what *really* matters to you, is integral to deciding how best to allocate your time. The idea for this exercises comes from the **time management book *First Things First* by acclaimed author, Stephen Covey:**

Think about all the various roles you play in life, e.g. partner, sister, friend, etc. Now imagine that it is your 80th birthday and you are having a big party. Everyone you love is there and they are all making speeches about that role you have played in their life and what it meant to them. What would you want them to say about you?



Next, create a shortlist of words that come up repeatedly. Group together similar words into themes, e.g. kind and compassionate, good-humoured and fun.



To narrow it down to a maximum of five core values, choose which of the shortlisted themes were the most important. Take time to think about each one and reflect on whether there is a more efficient way of encapsulating themes into an overarching value. For example, you might have words like kind, compassionate, and giving, but you could absorb all of these into an overarching value of generosity that encapsulates being generous with kindness and understanding, as well as your time and possessions.



The fact that you're describing these values as concepts can make them feel abstract and distant. To counteract this, personalise the core values you chose to increase your sense of ownership over them and to encourage you to think of yourself embodying these values, and, therefore, living according to them. Do this simply by summing them up in a series of "I am..." statements. So, your core values will go from a set of abstract statements to the following:

"I am generous", "I am fun loving", etc.

Next, go through each of your core values and attach a behaviour to it. By practising this behaviour, you will know you are living according to your core values. For example, what does being "fun loving" mean to you? It may mean that you don't take yourself too seriously, you look for the humour in things, and seek out joy, even when life is at its darkest. Go through each of the values you chose and write a set of behaviours to accompany them.

Our core values are supposed to inform our decision-making in life so that we know we are making choices based on what is really important to us, rather than circumstances, fear, what others think, or any of the myriad factors that influence our life choices. Here is a tool that you can use to easily check in with your core values when making a decision. To use this, fill out the table with your own core values, behaviours and the questions you would ask yourself based on each one when facing a major decision. During the decision-making process, use the “Answer(s)” section to explore the answers to each of these questions before making your final verdict about whether the decision would violate your core values. If you find that your verdict is “Yes” or “Somewhat”, you will know that this decision is not in line with your core values and you should seriously consider taking another course of action. If you find that the decision violates a core value, but you still really want to do it, you may need to re-evaluate your core values.

Value	Behaviour	Question(s) – questions to ask yourself based on this core value when facing a decision.	Answer(s) – reflect on and answer each question honestly.	Does it violate this core value? (Yes/No/Somewhat)
Generosity	<i>I am giving of my time, kindness and compassion. I share what I have with</i>	<i>Would this decision compromise my ability to give openly? Would it drain me of the energy I have to give? Is it unkind or</i>		

9. Balance your time

Once we have built our awareness of the various types of energy, we need to find a strategy for managing our schedule in a way that allows us to balance them effectively.

There are plenty of books and courses that train us to be more effective, to execute tasks in limited time and obtain our expected results (and sometimes even more). However, the truth is, we cannot control everything. The most realistic and beneficial step towards achieving our own individual sense of balance is not about squeezing the most productivity out of every minute of the day, it is about identifying and prioritising our own values and the things most important to us. Achieving good work-life balance as a project manager necessitates the development of time management skills, but the purpose of those skills should ultimately be about planning your days, weeks, and months to ensure the things most important to your sense of life fulfilment are prioritised.

Among thousands of time management tools that are available, there is one that best reflects this approach: **The Eisenhower Matrix**. This simple tool helps you to prioritise your tasks by urgency and importance. There are many versions of this matrix, but the following is my favourite and I have nicknamed it the “**Four D Tasks**”:

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	1. DO	2. DECIDE WHEN
NOT IMPORTANT	3. DELEGATE	4. DELETE

How do you use this tool?

1. First, decide if you would like to plan a day or, for example, a whole week. I prefer a wider perspective, so I use it to plan a week at a time. It also helps me to be more realistic and flexible with my schedule.
2. On a separate piece of paper, prepare a list of tasks that you want and/or must do in the period of time for which you are planning. Include every aspect of your life. Don't make a separate list for your work life and your personal life—you only have one life and 24 hours in a day! You are not just a professional. You are also a family member and friend, and those aspects of yourself are just as important as your professional life. Don't forget to plan time for yourself either and make sure to include activities that allow to rejuvenate your physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual energy.
3. Now, allocate each task from your list into the matrix quarter that best describes it. The first few times you attempt this can be challenging, but you will become better at prioritising tasks the more you do it. Here are some tips that might help you while you're getting started:
 - a. *Urgent and important* – this should include everything that is connected to your core personal or professional objectives and values. It should also include tasks that are particularly urgent or have impending deadlines. An example of this type of task is something health related, either for you or for someone else for whom you are responsible. These tasks cannot be delegated and the consequences of not doing them are harmful to you or others. Do these tasks immediately.
 - b. *Not urgent but important*– this should include tasks connected to your core objectives, aspirations, and values, but which are not urgent in this moment. In this part, you should always plan the activities that sustain your good physical, intellectual, spiritual and social wellbeing. You also include things that help you to develop, become a better person, take care of your family, and feel joy. At work, this might include your overall strategic goals. This is the most important quarter. Our aim should always be to spend as much time as possible on this quarter. It is here that you find balance and time for rejuvenating your energy. Schedule time for these tasks every day.

- c. *Urgent and not important* – this should include everything that should be done as soon as possible but does not contribute to your core objectives and values. This is usually where we put tasks that have little to do with our overall goals, including interruptions that must be dealt with, unimportant meetings, and administrative work. The best way to manage these tasks is to delegate it to someone else if possible. Remember, delegation can have a very positive effect on your team. It can allow less experienced colleagues to gain new skills. At home, delegation to other family members can build a sense of shared responsibility.

- d. *Not urgent and not important* – this usually includes time-wasting activities. You may be tempted to include all unproductive tasks here, but remember; resting, spending time with your family or just watching movies is not a waste of time. These activities build your social and emotional capacity and rejuvenate your energy reserves. Therefore, tasks like this should be assigned to the second quarter: **Not urgent but important**. If you have doubts about whether an activity is restorative or time wasting, think of the result of this activity, or how you feel afterwards. If you feel relaxed and energised for other important activities, then it belongs in the second quarter. But if you feel guilty or even more tired afterwards, then you know the answer: It is time to eliminate these tasks from your daily plan.

Exercise No. 9

Time management

Make your own time management matrix.

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT		
NOT IMPORTANT		

Look carefully on your own matrix. In all the quarters, you should have no more than seven tasks. Surveys show that seven is the maximum we can cope with at any given time. Now, you have all the information you need to plan your day or week. In doing this, remember to:

- Perform the tasks from the first quarter as soon as possible.
- Each day reserve time for tasks from the second quarter. This approach helps you to feel that you are on the right track and are living in line with your values and objectives. And don't forget about physical activity!
- Carefully estimate the time you need to execute each task. Plan only 60% of the time you have each day. The rest you need for unexpected but important issues and tasks that you didn't manage to finish the previous day.
- Perform your most important tasks during the part of the day in which you are most productive. Usually this is within a maximum 3-hour period. Treat this rule as something non-negotiable, even with yourself.

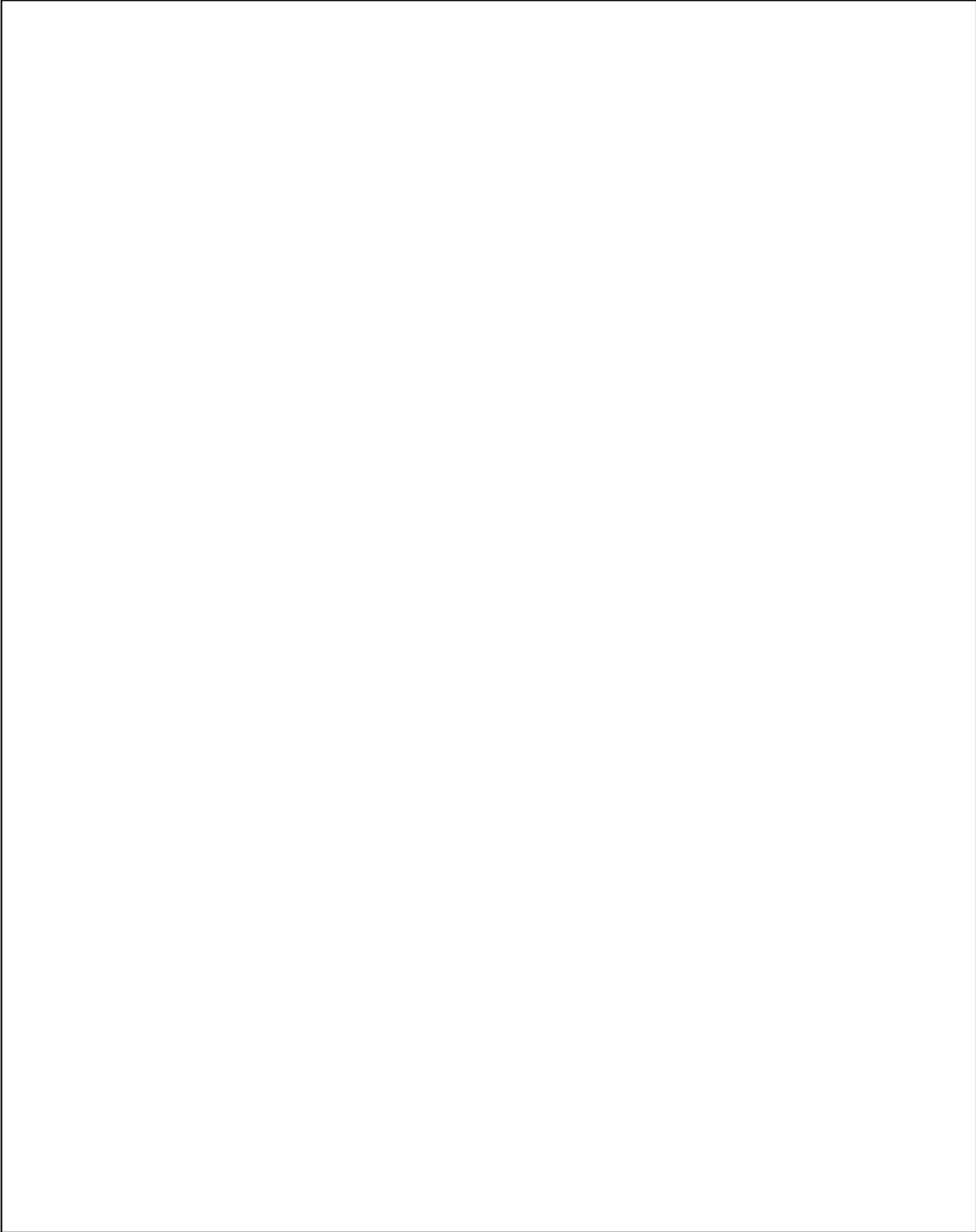
- After each hour of work, plan 10 minutes for energy recuperation. It will keep your body in good condition.
- Be realistic but also kind to yourself. Each day should have at least one activity that brings you joy.

Managing expectations

Expecting yourself to be enormously productive every single day, and to never be subject to interruptions or distractions is unreasonable. Expecting your work to always be of exceptional quality even for very tight deadlines or with lots of other competing priorities is also unreasonable. You can only do your best with the time you have. Learn to go easy on yourself and to be flexible with your expectations. Yes, it's good to aim high, but there will inevitably be times when you simply won't have time to prepare an amazing presentation with all kinds of fancy graphs or an incredibly detailed application that will wow the funders. Sometimes you have to work with what you have. Give yourself permission to simply do your best and judge your own work based on that, not on what would have been perfect.

This may seem like a cop-out but it actually demonstrates reason, flexibility and resilience. It means you can react quickly to the circumstances and adapt your work style accordingly. Most employers would prefer to have someone with those qualities than someone whose standards are impressively high, but who falls apart under the pressure when they can't get something perfect.

Your notes

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, occupying most of the page. It is intended for the user to write their notes.